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## Education and Training of Basic School Teachers in Ghana

**MEREKU, K. D.**

The aim of this chapter is to identify different forms of initial teacher training (ITT) programmes that exist for the education and training of basic school teachers in Ghana. It examines the general characteristics of the secondary level conventional ITT programmes and discusses the need for changes in this pattern of teacher training. The chapter also examines alternative patterns that can be employed in the initial training of primary school teachers. Finally, the chapter x-rays the induction of newly trained teachers and the further education of teachers in Ghana.

### **Introduction**

Education is a necessary element in the development of every nation. It is an important tool for the optimum development of a nation's human or manpower resources, which contributes largely to a nation's total economic growth. Educational planning, for this reason, is a vital part of the total economic and social planning that a nation undertakes periodically in order to improve the well being and living conditions of its people.

National educational systems are, in this regard, not static. They have changed in response to national development plans and will continue to do so, so long as governments continue to search for new schemes and initiate policies that will improve the living conditions of their people. For instance, in the 1960s and 1970s many Africa states, as part of their post-independence development programmes, initiated major educational reforms to ensure universal primary education. This resulted in massive increases in primary school enrolment. Fafunwa and Aisiku (1982: 254) provided evidence on some of the post-independence educational reforms in Africa. They observed that:

By the Education Act of 1961 in Ghana, primary education became free and compulsory. Kenya introduced partial free primary education in 1971 when a presidential decree abolished tuition fees in some parts of that country considered educationally backward; and in 1974 free primary education was extended to all parts of Kenya. Similarly, primary education became free in all parts of Nigeria in 1976.

Changes in educational systems abound the world over. Such moves which lead to new policies, which have sometimes been described as initiatives, innovations or reforms, result in changes in educational structures, curriculum content and the general orientation to and organisation of the curriculum. Though such changes have directly influenced the growth of educational opportunities, which have resulted in expansion in teacher education institutions in many countries, the teacher training system, as pointed out by Husen (1979: 33), appears to be the most rigid and conservative part of national education systems. This observation is particularly true in the case of developing countries where teachers training systems acquired as legacies from foreign domination, have changed very little in spite of massive post-independence of educational reforms embarked upon by governments.

In Ghana, the 4-year post-middle teacher training programme which was established in 1927 was used for over half a century. The setting up of the 4-year post-middle programme was based on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Education during the rule of Governor Guggisberg which laid emphasis on quality in the training of teachers. The programme was established in 1927 to replace the old 2-year post primary course (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1978: 59). But the 4-year post-middle programme continued to be used to produce teachers until 1991 when it was phased out completely.

However, the 2-year post-secondary programme, and later 3-year post-secondary programme, that replaced the post-middle middle programme and still in use in the country today, is not too different in its pattern (i.e. organisation, content and method) of training. That is, even though the reforms in education in the country began over a decade ago, it has had little influence on the teacher education system.

It can therefore be argued that teacher training systems are not easily affected by reforms in education even though the success of any education system depends on the availability of competent teachers. The result is that teacher training system have remained unchanged for long periods.

### **Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Programmes**

Teacher Education, that is, 'the form of education which is properly planned and systematically tailored for those who teach or will teach in primary and post-primary levels of schooling' (Okafor, 1988: 25) can be considered in three phases: pre-service, induction and in-service. These three phases are now considered as part of a continuous process (Landsheere, 1987).

The first phase, often called the pre-service teacher education phase, is also described as *Initial Teacher Training* (ITT). In this chapter, ITT is regarded as any type of formal preparation for the teaching profession which one is required to undergo before (s)he is certified as teacher and accorded a qualified teacher's status. It usually involves a pre-service education and training programme. Generally speaking, ITT programmes are institution-based (or college-based).

The origin of the institution-based ITT programme, or what Gardner (1979) described as the conventional ITT programme, can be traced back to the first training colleges of modern Europe at the start of the nineteenth Century. The

first institutions which became the model 'secondary level' and 'pre-tertiary post-secondary level' ITT colleges in many developing countries were originally started by the early Christian missionaries and colonial governments. The pattern – i.e. organisation, content and method – of these conventional ITT programmes were therefore identical to the pattern which was imported from Europe.

In other words, what became the accepted (or conventional) pattern for training teachers in many developing countries was a slight modification of the traditional nineteenth century European pattern of training teachers. Gimeno and Ibanez's (1981) report on the international comparative study – *'The Education of Primary and Secondary School Teachers'* – and evidence from different countries have revealed the broad classification of ITT establishments stated below (Graves, 1990; Bude and Greenland, 1983; Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982; Commonwealth Secretariat, 1974).

- Secondary level ITT (Secondary Certificate programme)
- Pre-tertiary Post-secondary level ITT (Secondary Certificate programme)
- Tertiary level ITT (Diploma and/or Advanced Diploma programme)
- Tertiary level ITT (Degree or Post Graduate Certificate in Education programme)

A brief description of the nature of programmes and the types of qualification they lead to are considered in the next section of this chapter.

#### Secondary Level ITT Programme

The programme is designed for the lowest grade of primary school teacher. The programme is common in countries whose basic education systems terminate at the end of the lower secondary sections (i.e. junior secondary, or middle, school). Entrants accepted for the programme are holders of Middle, or Junior Secondary, School Leaving Certificates; and also holders of Secondary School Certificate or General Certificate of Education (GCE) whose passes do not qualify them for the Post Secondary programme in the next section. Depending on the total number of years required for basic education in one country, the duration of the course may vary between three to five years. The programme leads to the award of Teacher's Certificate. This is the level at which majority of primary school teachers teaching in many developing countries have been trained (Gimeno and Ibanez, 1981). Because the designers of this type of programme aim at producing a teacher whose intellectual ability will be up to a level equivalent to GCE 'O' level, the programme places more emphasis on subject content. The Certificate 'A' 4-year programme in Ghana, which was phased out in 1991, is an example of the secondary level ITT programme.

#### Pre-tertiary Post-secondary Level ITT Programme

The programme is designed for students who have completed secondary schools and possess passes in Secondary School Certificate or General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations. The pre-tertiary post-secondary ITT programme generally takes either two or three years. In most countries, since colleges at this level and those at the secondary level (described above) are both housed in the same institution, there are no marked differences between their

curricula. The pre-tertiary post-secondary ITT programme leads to the award of a Teacher's Certificate. In many countries teachers who are trained at this level teach in the lower section of secondary schools or junior secondary schools.

#### Tertiary Level ITT Diploma Programme

The tertiary level ITT Diploma programme is offered in institutions of higher learning – advanced teachers' colleges, university colleges and universities. Entry requirements to such institutions are equivalent to, but not as high as, those required for the university entry. Duration of the tertiary level ITT Diploma programme may be two or three years. The programme leads to the award of Diploma in Education. Gimeno and Ibanez (1981) observed that the tertiary level ITT Diploma programme in many developing countries, was designed for the training of secondary school teachers.

#### Tertiary level ITT Degree Programme

Programmes leading to degree qualifications in teaching are offered in universities, polytechnics, university colleges, or colleges of education. Tertiary level ITT Degree Programmes vary from one country to another. But generally there are three major types of programmes,

- i. the 3 or 4-year degree programme that leads to a Bachelor of Education degree.
- ii. the 3 or 4-year degree programme that leads to a Bachelor of Arts or Science with a concurrent Diploma in Education.
- iii. the one year traditional topping-up course for holders of Bachelor of Arts or Science degrees who wish to qualify professionally as teachers. This leads to the award of a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

Gimeno and Ibanez (op cit) reported that approximately 15 per cent of the forty-one countries involved in their study were training their primary school teachers at this level in the mid 1970s. The position however has not changed very much because mass secondary schooling and higher education have still not been accomplished in most developing countries, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa (The World Bank, 1988). Teacher education programmes offered in Ghana at this level are mainly for the training of secondary school teachers.

#### **Characteristics of the Secondary Level Conventional ITT**

In her book, *'The Development of Training Colleges in England and Wales: 1800 - 1975'*, Dent (1977) produced an account on how the monitorial system of teacher training hastened the development of broader type of teacher training, and the establishment of residential colleges. She pointed out that by 1860 there were 34 training colleges, and by 1890 when the first day training colleges were established the number had grown to 43.

The early nineteenth century ITT college establishments were what would be described today as Teacher Training Schools. The general culture, way of social interaction, and the structure and organisation of work in most teacher training colleges today still reflect many characteristics of the early small mission and colonial Teacher Training Schools.

## Curriculum and Social Life

In Ghana the colleges are generally located outside communities giving trainees very little opportunity of mixing with people in the broader environment outside the college. Discipline is strictly enforced with rules and regulation over attendance, dressing, exeat, response to bells and punctuality, doing exercises, competitions and punishments. Life in the colleges is controlled giving students very little opportunity to be responsible for their own affairs.

The conventional secondary level ITT programme, as indicated above, lead to the award of 'Teacher's Certificate' qualification in teaching. This qualification was found to be equivalent to School Certificate in Secondary Education or GCE 'O' Level. Gimeno and Ibanez, (1981) observed that because the designers of such programmes aimed at producing teachers whose intellectual ability be up to a level up to GCE 'O' level, the courses tend to shift more emphasis onto subject content. The result was that professional and practical aspects of teaching, which did not lend itself to theoretical college-based approach, were rated secondary in the teacher education curriculum.

That is, the curriculum of the conventional secondary level ITT programme, to a large extent, fits the description of work in the nineteenth century training colleges in England by Dent (1977: 14). The author stated that

College staff worked very hard to make something worthwhile out of such indifferent material. They gave their students inordinately long hours of study, on a vast range of subjects typically Religious Knowledge, Church History, English Grammar, English Literature, History, Geography, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Menstruation, Natural Philosophy (i.e. Science), Handwriting, Drawing, Music with occasionally some educational theory, and invariably much school practice.

Inevitably, academic, study was reduced to information memorization and regurgitation

However, the conventional secondary level ITT colleges were given a high status in the pre-independence era, i.e. before the 1960s. In his attempt to pass judgement on the work of this initial period of uncoordinated activity in Africa, Lewis (1954: 13) observed that

it must be recognised that despite the apparent deficiencies, such education as was provided not only produced an excellent cadre of local assistants for the state and church, but also a number of outstanding individuals.

## Poor Qualification of Entrants

It was considered above that ITT programmes are hardly affected by reforms in basic or primary education. The inertia of ITT programmes to change is due in part to financial limitations and partly to reasons related to the general development of the formal school system. The usual practice observed is that until mass schooling or education has been attained at a given level of education in a country's educational system that country cannot produce a majority teaching force whose qualification or education is above this level. This explains why in many countries, especially developing countries, ITT programmes for primary school teachers have remained at the secondary level or pre-tertiary post-secondary level with little modifications.

In Ghana mass secondary schooling terminates with junior secondary education. That is, the educational system does not offer all pupils the opportunity of continuing their education at the senior secondary school. This implies that at the end of secondary education only a minority of students (i.e. less than the 50 per cent) are available for the different forms of tertiary education programmes offered in universities, polytechnics, institutes of professional studies, training colleges, etc.

Usually if the majority of students who have benefited from an educational system are not available at the level where selection is made for further education, there is difficulty in obtaining the right calibre of entrants to programmes that lead to poorly paid jobs like teaching. ITT programmes lead to working in a poorly paid a profession with very little opportunity and motivation for further development as compared with the opportunities that exist in other occupations. This means the conventional secondary or pre-tertiary post-secondary level ITT programmes are usually unsuccessful in attracting qualified entrants. This has been one of the main hindrances to the efforts made in different countries improve the quality of teachers in ITT.

### **Need for Changes in Secondary Level Conventional ITT Programmes**

With the growth of secondary education and later university education, concerns have been raised about the quality of products of secondary or pre-tertiary post-secondary level ITT programmes. Some of these concerns are considered next.

#### **Selection of Top Candidates for ITT Programmes**

The poor qualification of entrants to secondary or pre-tertiary post-secondary level ITT programmes have raised concerns throughout the world for the need to make the most capable secondary school graduates to enter teacher training (Thomas, 1990). There is great realisation that teacher quality, to a great extent, rests on the selection of top candidates for teaching. These developments warranted the raising of the entry qualification to teacher training and change in the structure and curricula of colleges. Paragraphs 14 and 18 of the 'Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers' (ILO/UNESCO, 1984) stated that:

Para 14: Admission to teacher preparation should be based on the completion of the appropriate secondary education, and the evidence of the possession of personal qualities likely to help the persons concerned to become worthy members of the profession.

Para 18: ..(2) Steps should be taken with the view of achieving international recognition of teaching credentials conferring professional status in terms of standards agreed to internationally.

#### **Shifting Emphasis to Teachers' Professional Training**

Furthermore, the emphasis in teacher training is being shifted from general education and mastery of subject disciplines onto the teachers' professional training. This has become largely necessary because recent social, cultural and economic changes in societies require school curricula to be brought in line with needs and thus assigning new roles to teachers. Bone (1987) argued that

the new roles of the teacher has been made more difficult as a result of the decline in employment opportunities for pupils on leaving school, and the undermining of the teacher's authority as a

teacher by the highly visible competition of television, computers and other new technological devices.

Besides, the fast rate at which knowledge has advanced in recent years makes a 'general education/subject study' biased teacher training curriculum one which Landsheere (1987) describes as less valid and narrowly conceived. At the 15th session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education in Helsinki in 1987, it was proposed that

"Initial training (at least three years and at University level) should be based on broad and sound education. It should give teachers the intellectual basis needed to meet new challenges in their future work in schools and to select what is essential knowledge from the mass of available information.

Emphasis should be placed in initial training on

1. giving student teachers the personal and social skills (for communication, adaptability, creativity, self-confidence and empathy) needed for classroom management, team work and relating to parents.
2. teaching practice and knowledge of the school system and how it works;
3. mastery of subject disciplines and understanding of how subject knowledge can be selected, organised and transmitted; i.e. the didactic preparation of the material to be taught;
4. philosophical reflections about values and their transmission to young people in pluralist European societies (Council for Cultural Co-operation, 1989: 6)

Cases can be identified in many parts of the world to show how teacher training systems are implementing certain aspects of the above recommendations. In France, for example, the Institut Formation Pe-dagogique et Psychosociologique in Paris, did not only provide classes in traditional subject matter but paralleled such studies with group work, self-directed investigations, and self-evaluation activities intended to enhance the future teacher's personality and potentials. A substantial part of the course time was devoted to (a) observing and participating in schools and youth clubs at all levels and (b) studying at the Institut in work groups, seminars and resource centres (Cohen, et al., 1984).

The France illustration above shows that developing the creativity and personal-social skills of teacher trainees is being accorded as much attention as subject-matter knowledge and pedagogy. However, in less developed countries, Dove (1986) contends that the latter will continue to be emphasised at the expense of developing the trainees' creativity and personal-social skills because of the poor quality of candidates that are recruited into training.

#### Teacher Education as a Life-long Process

There is the general realisation that it will not be necessary to teach the trainee everything he needs to know during his ITT course. Gardner (1979) contends initial teacher training should basically aim to provide the trainee with adequate armory of skill which will enable him/her, at the outset of his teaching, to teach competently and survive the rigours of this first years in the classroom. At the International conference of Education in Geneva in 1975, this issue was discussed and adopted as one of the recommendations expressed in the document 'Recommendation Nr 69 to Ministries of Education concerning

'the Changing Role of the Teacher and on In-service Training'. Articles 10 and 11 of this document state that:

10. In view of continuous renovation and development of general and pedagogical knowledge, and of the constant change taking place in education systems and the increasingly creative character of pedagogical activities, it does not seem possible to equip the student teacher with knowledge and skills which will be sufficient for his whole professional life. Therefore, the initial preparation for the profession, pre-service education and training, should be considered as the first fundamental stage in the process of the continuous education of teachers.
11. Hence a comprehensive policy is needed to ensure that teacher education is reorganised as a continuous co-ordinate process which begins with pre-service preparation and continues throughout the teachers professional career. In such a system, pre-service and in-service education should be integrated, fostering the concept of life long learning and the need for recurrent education.

Though young teachers need a lot of support in the first few years of their career, in Ghana their education ends after training college. The induction of newly trained teachers is considered later in this chapter.

A pattern of ITT which will provide for the pre-service education of teachers and also contribute substantially towards their further education is what is needed to replace the present conventional secondary level programme. The pattern should be one which will enable the scarce resources available for ITT to be devoted not solely to pre-service education (or college work), but also to the continuous support of the teacher while he is out in the teaching field.

### **Towards a Broader Definition of the Teacher**

Since in many developing countries communities have agrarian and partly subsistence economies which are changing very fast, it is necessary that experiences in ITT programmes are related to the needs of local communities as well as national philosophies and aspirations. The teacher cannot now be defined narrowly as a 'school teacher'. In addition to his school duties, the teacher is also expected to assume more responsibility, in collaboration with other educational agents in the community, for the preparation for community life, family life, productive activity, etc. In Ghana, teachers have always played leading roles in the development of communities. In the rural areas many of the people elected as 'assembly-men' (or community leaders) in the country are teachers.

Teachers therefore require more than what the traditional or conventional secondary level ITT programme can offer. There is the need for a pattern that will enable the ITT establishment to be viewed as part of the community and ensure the teacher is well exposed and prepared for new roles and functions in the teaching field.

### **Alternative Patterns of ITT Programmes**

A substantial proportion of the total primary teaching force in many developing countries is unqualified. Between the years 1976 and 1980, Putsoa (1983) pointed out that percentage of qualified teachers in relation to the total primary teaching force in Anglophone Africa ranged from a low 19 per cent (Malawi) to a high 61 per cent and 71 per cent (Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively). In Ghana, the percentage of untrained teachers in the total primary teaching force



ten years later, that is, in the 1987/88 school year, was 48.9 per cent (Pandit and Asiamah, 1988). The prevalence of untrained teachers in the primary teaching force require that educational planners review the conventional secondary level ITT programme. There is the need to find other patterns for producing effective primary teachers at minimum cost.

Apart from training many primary school teachers, the conventional ITT programme made little contribution to the upgrading of untrained teachers. The failure of the conventional secondary level ITT programme to cope with these demands led to efforts to bring about fundamental changes in its organisational pattern. Bude and Greenland (1984) indicate that the efforts made were not necessarily aimed at completely phasing out the programmes but to find alternative patterns of producing teachers at minimum cost and meeting the extra demands of teachers education.

The alternative patterns of ITT programmes that were identified in some developing countries were those based on what Honeybone (1979: 15) had described as 'an integrated mixture of college education'. The integrated teacher education programmes included in a combination of two or more of the following:

- Distance Education
- Short Residential Attachment
- Day Releases/Seminar/Workshop
- Visit and Work with the Trainee Teachers in their classrooms

The integrated teacher education programmes, which were generally 'on the job training programmes', were aimed largely at the bulk of unqualified or untrained teachers who were teaching in schools. Below is a description of the various types of the integrated teacher education programmes.

#### *Distance education*

Distance education is a teaching/learning process in which there is no face-to face contact between the learner and the lecturer(s). Distance education takes place either by correspondence through the post or by means of television and radio broadcasts. Sometimes a combination of all three are used, that is, the correspondence is supplemented by TV and radio broadcasts. Distance education programmes have the advantage of reaching students who live in remotest parts of a country. In some countries without such facilities many of such students apparently have no chance of continuing their education.

Experience has shown that some subjects (or topics) are more amenable to distance education than others. Its main setback is its inability to provide immediate feedback. It is however difficult to use in countries with poor postal systems.

#### *Short Residential Attachment*

These are short period residential courses organised for trainee teachers. The duration of a course may vary between 3 and 16 weeks. Such courses are generally planned to take place in teachers training establishments when students doing the conventional courses are on holidays. The courses are very

necessary for trainee teachers who are training on-the-job in that it makes it possible for them to meet face-to-face with other trainee teachers and trainers.

This gives them the opportunity to share their experiences and generalize how to carry out various professional tasks like teaching particular subjects or topics, controlling a class, using or preparing a particular teaching aid etc. The areas covered during the short residential attachment include Education Theory, Teaching Methods and General Studies. During the course, the trainee teachers receive feedback on their distance education work.

#### *Day Releases/Workshops/Seminars*

Trainee teachers may also be released regularly to attend one-day courses at local centres. This can be the Local Teachers' Centre, the institution for The Short Residential Attachment or any selected venue. Day Releases make it possible for the trainees and the field trainers to meet very regularly to consider issues related to their students. The day releases generally take the form of lectures, but occasionally seminars and workshop are organised for the trainees.

#### *Field Tutors Visits to Trainee Teachers in their Classrooms*

Experienced teacher educators are appointed as field tutors to provide support for trainee teachers. The field tutor may be expected to visit each trainee in his/her classroom for about three times in a year. During such visits he completes a report on the trainees' progress, discusses his/her problems and offers suggestions.

### **The Induction of Newly Trained Teachers**

A beginning teacher is a teacher in his probationary year. In Ghana, this is the first two years after pre-service education. Officers from the District Education Directorates are expected to visit these teachers in schools to supervise their work at least thrice during this period. Probationary teachers are often *confirmed* at the end of the two years and accorded a *qualified teacher's status*. The need to provide support for the beginning teacher has become more necessary than before because there has been a drastic reduction in the ages at which most beginning teachers enter the service. Since students can now enter ITT colleges with Senior Secondary School qualifications, we now have a situation where many very young entrants enter at ages 18 and 19 years. This means they begin their teaching careers as early as the age of 21, very inexperienced in life, and therefore require a great deal of support.

Making a shift from a trainee-teacher to a fully-fledged teacher is a dramatic and traumatic experience. The change is rather instantaneous. A few weeks after college, beginning teachers find themselves in a completely different and less supportive environment where mistakes are not very much unexpected and peer group friendship, promoting and suggestions as well as guidance from tutors are unavailable. Beginning teachers are therefore very likely to encounter many problems in the critical first years of their career.

Studies from different countries have examined the perceived problems of beginning teachers. Veenman's (1984) review of such studies identified the following as the problems perceived most: classroom discipline; motivating students; dealing with individual differences; assessing students' work;

relationship with parents; organisation of class work; insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies; and dealing with problems of individual children. In Ghana, the late payment of salaries is a major problem that beginning teachers encounter. Sometimes these teachers work without salaries for nearly a whole year.

In many less developed countries (including Ghana), the quality of training received by trained teachers, the lack of funds and the unavailability of opportunities for them to experience organised in-service education and training give experienced teachers little confidence to provide support for the needs of beginning teachers. Besides the presence of large numbers of untrained teachers in schools lessens the concern expressed in these countries over the needs of beginning trained teachers.

For these reasons, beginning trained teachers are seen as fully-fledged teachers. In Ghana, it is not uncommon to find teachers in their first years of appointment being appointed as head teachers. Asiedu-Akrofi (1985: 19) reported the following experience of a young and devoted teacher in Ghana:

I took my first appointment at Mataheko with great joy and walked to the head teacher's office to say hello on the day of re-opening of the school. My presence looked like a welcome relief to many anxieties he had had over the shortage of teachers in his school. His lips parted in languid smile. 'Hello Kofi! You are welcome. Here are your books, your class is class five. Since you are already trained, you know everything, no problem, I wish you luck.

One thing, which is typical of most beginning teachers' first days in school, that can be deduced from this young teacher's experience is that he needed and expected some induction. In Ghana, beginning or newly trained teachers are regarded as fresh from college and exuberant with modern ideas, and, for that matter, are hardly given any form of professional support when they commence teaching. That is, in spite of their low qualifications, these teachers after completing their training are expected to assume full teaching responsibilities in schools that they are posted.

The fact that their acquisition of theoretical knowledge of the basic school subjects is recent does not necessarily mean beginning teachers have adequate mastery over their content and pedagogy. They lack professional practical knowledge, that is, knowledge about teachers' activities and professional life at school (Bromme and Brophy, 1986). Many lack knowledge about how to teach certain subjects to particular types of pupils in a particular type of school. They lack knowledge about testing and assessing pupils' attainment; classroom discipline; motivating students; and how to overcome the problem of insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies. Thus the beginning teacher's ability to teach will depend to a great extent on how well he/she is able to acquire such knowledge and skills, and this will depend on the amount of support the teacher is likely to receive from his/her experienced (or long-serving) colleagues.

Even though they might have been exposed to aspects of such knowledge in their methodology lessons in college, beginning teachers have had little opportunity to experiment or trial it. They have hardly planned schemes of work, designed exercises and used it to diagnose learning difficulties, kept records on pupils' assessments, etc. Certain aspects of this knowledge,

however, cannot be found in texts. They can only be communicated orally by experienced colleagues. An experienced teacher may tell a beginning teachers how many pupils in his/her class can say, for instance, the 3 times table or do not understand the particular concept in mathematics.

The absence of planned professional support makes beginning teachers full of ambition on entering the profession, no sooner or later begin to face difficulties in their teaching. Under these circumstances, Akrofi (1985: 20) stated that the 'teachers will revert to 'safe' and tried methods when experiencing difficulty'. 'The teacher,' he stated further, 'tends to revert to the styles that they "learned" in their long "informal" training as pupils at school'. In spite of the fact that many experienced teachers have reverted to the use of safe methods they have a lot to offer beginning teachers in terms of professional practical knowledge.

The role that teacher education institutions can play in reverting this serious trend to enable beginning teachers to obtain their experienced colleagues' professional support cannot be over-emphasized. Teacher educators and trainees should be made aware of the fact that the 12 to 16 weeks of interns the latter experience as part of their training, cannot equip them with all the professional practical knowledge needed to teach effectively. It is therefore not enough for colleges to continue with the current practice of almost ignoring class teachers in schools where teacher trainees have their practice.

Mereku (1999) found experienced teachers to perceive beginning teachers as fairly or very successful in teaching mathematics because of the former's poor theoretical knowledge of new mathematics content. For this reason, beginning teachers hardly received any form of professional support from their experienced colleagues in the teaching of the subject. Experienced teachers should therefore be educated to identify the unlimited professional practical knowledge they can share with beginning teachers.

Beginning teachers should be made to understand that they are not better than their experienced colleagues even though the former have knowledge of recent educational theory and practice. This will make beginning teachers feel free to approach their experienced colleagues for professional support and also find opportunities to share new content and approaches they have learnt in college with them. On the other hand, experienced teachers will recognise the professional practical needs of the beginning counterparts and sympathise with them.

There is the need for involvement of schools in the training of teachers in initial teacher training colleges. Initial teacher training should be seen as the joint responsibility of both practicing teachers in schools and teacher trainers in colleges. During teaching practice, class teachers should not remain passive observers of 'young fresh-teachers' with "modern" educational ideas. They should have more responsibility in the trainees' practice than simply completing evaluation forms on the trainees at the end of the practice period. The two institutions have to work as partners. They have to cooperate as professionals in partnership. This has to be so because, as Alhassan (1994) rightly puts it, "education is a cooperative enterprise in which all hands must be on deck towards the realisation of societal goals".

## **Providing Further Education for Basic School Teachers**

In Ghana the initial training of primary or basic school teachers is done in colleges which offer 'secondary level' ITT programmes described above. The programmes lead 'certificates in teaching', which have been described as equivalent to School Certificate in Secondary Education (or GCE 'O' Level) qualification. Thus the academic qualifications of the majority of teachers in basic schools is low.

But in spite of their low qualifications, many teachers after completing their training have not had a workshop, demonstration lesson, or refresher course, organised in the places where they teach. Even in places where these have been organised, the courses were not taken seriously by the participants partly because of lack of incentives like payment of travel costs, overnight allowances and expenses on course materials (Obeng-Mensah, 1972; Dameh, 1983). They were also not taken seriously because several of such courses did not count towards the upgrading or promotion of the teacher (Mereku, 1995).

As a result of their low academic qualifications and the lack of in-service education, the social status of these teachers has sunk very low. Even though other factors like the social origins of teachers, the size of the teaching force, and the teacher's relationship with clients, also account for their low status, the influence of their low academic qualifications and the lack of opportunities for their further education and upgrading is considerable.

The academic qualifications of teachers are everywhere considerably higher than most other occupations and higher than the social service occupations with which they might be compared like nurses, agricultural extension officers, sanitation officers, etc. But today, this is no more the case with the Ghanaian Certificate "A" teacher. With the educational reforms, the qualification of the social service occupations has risen above that of most teachers. That is, the qualification of most teachers today as compared to other workers in the communities in which they leave is low. This was not the case two decades ago. It can be argued that the effect of teachers low academic qualifications on their social status and its consequences on their authority in both the classroom and community is one of the factors that account for the poor pupil performance in most of the nation's schools today.

The few primary teachers who achieve some development while in service are the ambitious and intellectually capable ones who pursue academic studies. Through private study of academic subjects, these teachers are either able to obtain or upgrade their general educational qualifications (i.e. General Certificate of Education - Ordinary and/or Advanced levels) and enter universities, university colleges, polytechnics, and advanced colleges of education. The teachers who pursue studies in these institutions of higher learning do not usually go back to the primary or basic schools after obtaining their diplomas or degrees. This is largely because the further education programmes in most of these institutions are not tailored to the needs of pupils studying in primary or basic schools.

The advanced colleges of education, which have now been amalgamated into the University College of Education of Winneba, were established to provide teachers with further education that will increase their professional competence

for teaching in all pre-tertiary level institutions. However, the programmes these institutions of higher learning offer are not very helpful for teachers who would teach at pre-school, and basic school levels. The result is that most teachers who complete their further education programmes in these institutions prefer to take up more prestigious teaching appointments in secondary schools and training colleges or are posted there by the Ministry of Education with the explanation that their services are most needed at these levels.

To have teachers with good qualifications in Ghanaian primary or basic schools, there is the need to upgrade the qualifications of certificate teachers in the field and raise the status of the secondary level ITT colleges to university colleges or tertiary level ITT institutions that will offer diploma programmes. The latter will enable teacher training institutions to attract the nation's most promising youths into the teaching profession. To do this, the University Rationalization Committee included in its report presented to government in 1988, a recommendation that advocated the transformation of ITT colleges into full tertiary level institutions (University Rationalization Committee, 1988). The committee also proposed the setting up of the University College of Education of Winneba to provide alternative channels for upgrading teachers' professional qualifications and to support the ITT colleges when they become full tertiary level institutions.

Basically, the University College of Education of Winneba is not an ITT institution. The university college of education was set up mainly to provide further education for teachers in service, and provide support for the continuous education of all teachers. But the university college admits to its diploma programmes both certificate teachers and 'A' Level untrained teachers to do the same courses for the award of diploma. The diploma programme is an initial teacher training programme for the 'A' Level GCE (or Senior Secondary School Certificate) holders who are untrained teachers.

Though the professional needs of the 'A' Level GCE group are different they are made to follow the same courses as their counterparts who are certificate teachers and have some experience in teaching basic school children. In this case, the former group is more likely to do better on the diploma programmes which give more attention to general education and mastery of subject disciplines than the teachers' professional training. But considering the fast rate at which knowledge has advanced in recent years, a 'general education and subject study' biased teacher education curriculum is not one that will be useful for teachers who require further education to teach in primary or basic schools.

The transformation of curricula and structure of ITT has reached such an advanced stage that suggests the training colleges will soon be ready to offer programmes that will lead to *tertiary level qualifications in teaching* or diplomas. If all basic school teachers should hold *diplomas* then the further education programme for teachers in UCEW should be focused on upgrading teachers with *secondary level qualifications* in teaching to the diplomas that the new ITT colleges will be awarding.

Considering the numbers involved, upgrading certificate can not be done in the traditional college-based or *conventional diploma* programmes currently being

offered in UCEW. Also there is an increasing realization that the conventional diploma programme which spreads over two or three years for upgrading teachers to Diploma status, is not only costly but also inconvenient to the majority of serving teachers. Many serving teachers cannot leave their jobs for long periods, and also study leave, if granted, will be expensive.

The Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) initiative being pursued by the government makes UCEW's roles more imperative than ever in the nation's teacher education programme. UCEW is expected to collaborate with the other agencies of teacher education – Ghana Education Service Teacher Education Unit, University of Cape Coast and the ITT colleges – in carrying out these roles. In the light of these, the FCUBE policy document recommends that further education programmes for the upgrading of Certificate 'A' teachers should employ modes other than the traditional full time college-based programmes. The INSET Diploma in Basic Education was proposed for the upgrading of the over 80,000 Cert. 'A' holders.

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